

**Research Dynamics in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum:
Insights from a Bibliometric Study**Siti Muthiatul Hasanah^{1*}, Heru Wibowo²Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA^{*1,2}^{*1}email: smuthiatulh@gmail.com²email: heruwibowo@uhamka.ac.id

Abstract

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to understand the dynamics of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the context of 21st century education transformation that emphasizes religious moderation, digital literacy, and inclusivity. Given the lack of studies that specifically map the development of the PAI curriculum bibliometrically, this study aims to provide a comprehensive mapping of trends, collaborations, authors, and themes that developed from 2015 to 2025. The method used is Scopus data-based bibliometric analysis with the PRISMA approach and processing using R software (Bibliometrix). The results show that publications will increase significantly in 2024, dominated by the social sciences and humanities, with Indonesia as the main contributor to global research. The thematic findings show that topics such as "curriculum", "religion", and "human" are the main driving themes, while concepts such as "inclusive education" and "Islamic moderation" have the potential to develop in the future. The novelty of this study lies in its explicit focus on the PAI curriculum, as well as a detailed mapping of international collaboration and thematic directions. Its contribution is significant to the development of Islamic education policies that are more contextual, progressive, and relevant to global agendas such as the SDGs.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Curriculum; Bibliometric Analysis.

Abstrak

Urgensi penelitian ini terletak pada kebutuhan mendesak untuk memahami dinamika kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam konteks transformasi pendidikan abad ke-21 yang menekankan pada moderasi beragama, literasi digital, dan inklusivitas. Mengingat minimnya studi yang secara khusus memetakan perkembangan kurikulum PAI secara bibliometrik,

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penelitian ini bertujuan memberikan pemetaan komprehensif terhadap tren, kolaborasi, penulis, dan tema yang berkembang dari tahun 2015 hingga 2025. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis bibliometrik berbasis data Scopus dengan pendekatan PRISMA dan pemrosesan menggunakan perangkat lunak R (Bibliometrix). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa publikasi meningkat signifikan pada 2024, didominasi oleh ranah ilmu sosial dan humaniora, dengan Indonesia sebagai kontributor utama riset global. Temuan tematik menunjukkan bahwa topik-topik seperti “curriculum”, “religion”, dan “human” menjadi motor themes utama, sementara konsep-konsep seperti “inclusive education” dan “Islamic moderation” memiliki potensi berkembang di masa depan. Kebaruan dari studi ini terletak pada fokus eksplisit terhadap kurikulum PAI, serta pemetaan terperinci terhadap kolaborasi internasional dan arah tematik. Kontribusinya signifikan bagi pengembangan kebijakan pendidikan Islam yang lebih kontekstual, progresif, dan relevan dengan agenda global seperti SDGs.

Kata Kunci: Islamic Religious Education; Curriculum; Bibliometric Analysis.

A. Introduction

Islamic religious education (PAI) has a fundamental role in shaping the character, moral values, and spirituality of students in the midst of the dynamics of globalization and rapid social transformation. In the modern context, the issue of developing the Islamic religious education curriculum is not only related to theological aspects, but also closely related to the needs of 21st-century learning that emphasizes digital literacy, critical thinking, and global competence. Globally, research on

Islamic education shows rapid development. Based on a *Scopus* search with the keywords TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic Education") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Curriculum"), a total of 1,074 documents were found, while if limited to the period 2015–2025, the fields of Sociology and Arts & Humanities, as well as only English-language journal articles, shrunk to 162 documents. This data shows a more specific research focus on the curriculum aspect and confirms the importance of

bibliometric analysis on the dynamics of this research in the past decade.

The issue of curriculum in Islamic religious education has strategic relevance to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the fourth goal (*Quality Education*) which emphasizes the equitable distribution of quality and inclusive education. Recent research, such as those conducted by (Lubis & Arsyad, 2024) shows that in 813 publications on Islamic education during the 2019–2024 period, the topic of curriculum was one of the most dominant themes studied along with the issue of learning methodology and teacher competence. This shows that the curriculum is not only an administrative instrument, but also a reflection on Islamic epistemological values in the context of modern education.

Various bibliometric studies have previously reviewed the development of Islamic education from various perspectives. (Puspitasari et al., 2023) Analyzed 593 themed publications *Islamic Education* in the period 1974–2023 and found that 2020 was the peak of productivity with 75 articles, signaling an increase in research interest

in the pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Meanwhile, (Ifani & Kartiwi, 2023) reviewed 500 studies on *Web Science* related to the quality of education in Islamic schools, shows that the issue of quality of education is closely related to the effectiveness of the curriculum. Study (Salsabilah et al., 2025) shows that research on *Quality of learning* in Islamic Religious Education increased significantly in the 2017–2020 period, although there were fluctuations thereafter. In addition, (Wahid et al., 2023) identifying new trends in multicultural Islamic education, indicating a diversification of research themes that also touch the curriculum dimension.

Although various bibliometric studies have been conducted to review Islamic education in general, most have not specifically highlighted the dynamics of research in the field of Islamic religious education curriculum. For example, a study by (Shodikin et al., 2025) covers a long period (2000–2025) for Islamic religious education, but does not examine the network of collaborations, productive writers, or keyword patterns that explicitly lead to the curriculum. Thus, there are research

gaps that need to be filled to understand how publication trends, scientific collaboration, and main themes are developing in the study of the PAI curriculum globally and regionally.

The main problem that arises is the lack of a comprehensive mapping of the dynamics of Islamic Religious Education curriculum research based on bibliometric data. If this issue is not studied systematically, then opportunities to identify the direction of scientific development, cross-border collaboration, and potential future research topics will be ignored. As a result, the development of the PAI curriculum risks not being in tune with global scientific dynamics and less adaptive to future educational needs.

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of research in the field of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum using a bibliometric approach to Scopus publication data in 2015–2025. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the research trends of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on the number of publications per year?

2. Which journal publishes the most articles in the field of Islamic Religious Education curriculum?
3. Who are the authors who have contributed the most to research publications related to the PAI curriculum?
4. What fields of study or disciplines contribute to PAI curriculum research?
5. Which countries have authors contributed and collaborated the most in publications on the PAI curriculum?
6. Which article is most influential by number of citations?
7. What are the key topics that often come up and potential future research directions in the field of PAI curriculum?

Academically, this research contributes to the Islamic education literature by strengthening the understanding of the structure and direction of research of the PAI curriculum through quantitative analysis and bibliometric visualization. Practically, the results of this research can be a reference for Islamic educational institutions, policy makers, and researchers to develop research

strategies and curriculum policies that are more contextual, inclusive, and oriented towards improving the quality of Islamic religious education at the global level.

B. Methods

This study uses a bibliometric analysis approach to map the dynamics of research on the curriculum in Islamic religious education (PAI) systematically. Bibliometrics is a quantitative method used to identify, classify, and analyze scientific publication data based on trends, keywords, collaborations, and the influence of citations. This approach is effective in understanding the development of a field of science and identifying research directions and gaps that have not been explored much (Quttainah dan BenSaid 2025). In this context, an analysis was carried out on scientific articles published and indexed in Scopus, with the keywords TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic education") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("curriculum"), resulting in a total of 1,074 documents. After the systematic application of the filter, 162 relevant documents were obtained for further analysis.

To ensure accuracy and validity in data sorting, this study adapts the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach as a framework in the article screening stage. The PRISMA model is used to identify, evaluate, and include relevant studies based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The stages of PRISMA include identification, screening, eligibility checks, and final inclusions, which are mapped out in a flowchart (Augusna et al., 2025). This stage ensures that only documents meet the criteria such as the fields of social sciences and humanities (SOCI and ARTS), types of documents and journal articles (*article*), in English, and published in 2015–2025 that is analyzed in depth.

In the data analysis stage, R software is used with the *Bibliometrix* which is run through RStudio. This tool was chosen for its ability to produce comprehensive bibliometric analysis, ranging from publication trend analysis, mapping of the most productive authors, collaboration analysis between countries, to analysis *Co-emergence* key keywords. In addition, the approach using *R* allows data visualization in the form of annual

trend charts, *Country collaboration map* and *Keyword co-occurrence network* without reliance on commercial software such as VOSviewer (Maulidi et al., 2025). All processes are done transparently and can be replicated, making this approach consistent with the latest scientific standards.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Publication Trends

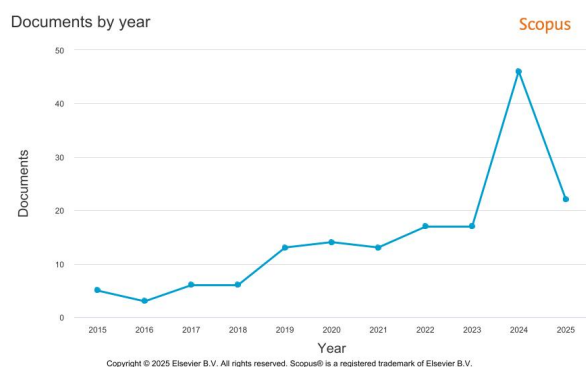


Image C1. Publication Development (2015-2025)

The graph of Scopus publications for 2015–2025 shows a major spike in 2024 marking the peak of scientific productivity, followed by a significant decline in 2025. These trends can be interpreted through a lens *Innovation Diffusion* and *Mode 2 Knowledge Production* (Nowotny et al., 2021), which shows a shift in the system of science production towards a more transdisciplinary, applicative, and responsive form to global challenges.

The surge in 2024 can be attributed to increased research in the fields of AI, public health, and the post-pandemic green transition. (Dwivedi et al., 2021) shows that the massive adoption of AI and digitalization has a direct impact on the number and pace of scientific publications globally, especially on strategic topics such as digital transformation and sustainability.

However, the decline in 2025 reflects *Post-spike correction*, where the scientific system seeks to strike a balance between quantity and quality. (Horbach, 2020) in his study showed that during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the publication process was accelerated but then corrected by tightening review standards. This is in line with the idea *Post-Normal Science* (Funtowicz dan Ravetz 2020), which Ravetz updated, that in situations of high uncertainty, such as pandemics, science develops rapidly but risks lowering accuracy. The 2025 decline could also be an indicator of the saturation of certain topics or a temporary reduction in funding for scientific publications.

2. Main Journal

Documents per year by source

Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources. Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data

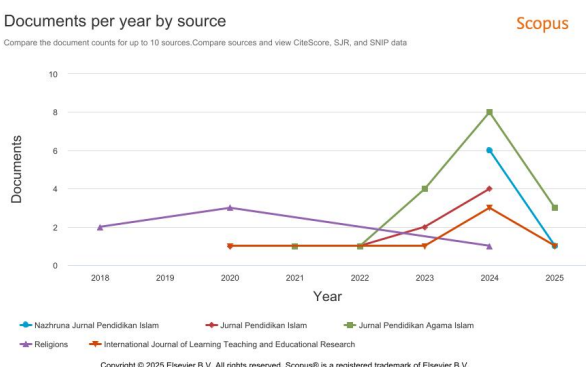


Image C2. Journal Source

Based on the "Documents per year by source" graph from Scopus that you attached, there has been a significant increase in the number of publications in 2023 to a peak in 2024, especially from journals such as *Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, *Nazhruna Journal of Islamic Education* and *Journal of Islamic Education*. This surge indicates that the field of Islamic education has experienced intense attention from the academic community during this period. This is in line with the findings (Kamilla et al., 2025) conducted a bibliometric analysis of Islamic education research trends in Indonesian universities, and concluded that there was a significant increase in the quantity and quality of research post-COVID-19 pandemic. They mentioned that the main focus of the publication is on strengthening

religious moderation and the integration of Islamic values in the higher education curriculum.

This increase is also in line with the shift in the learning paradigm due to the digital era. (Etivali & Rusydiyah, 2025) found that the topic of online learning in Islamic education has become one of the dominant themes since the pandemic. They explain that digital transformation is not only a technical solution, but also paves the way for a new pedagogical approach in religious education. Their research also shows that the growth of publications follows the wave of government policies in encouraging the digitalization of the curriculum of madrassas and Islamic campuses. This phenomenon is reinforced by research (Hamdi et al., 2025), which maps that the *Social-emotional intelligence* has become an important topic in the international Islamic education literature, along with the need for a spiritual and humanistic approach in digital age education.

However, the decline in publications in 2025 shown in all journals is likely to reflect the phenomenon of "natural correction" in the scientific publication system. As

expressed by (Nurasih et al., 2025), previous surge in publications was often driven by the euphoria of technological innovation or incentive policies that were then followed by normalization when evaluation standards began to tighten. In another study, (Huda & Syahidin, 2024) found that although there are five main clusters in the map of the development of Islamic education, only a small number maintain a sustainable trend until 2025, indicating the importance of strengthening the quality of research rather than just quantity.

3. Productive Writer

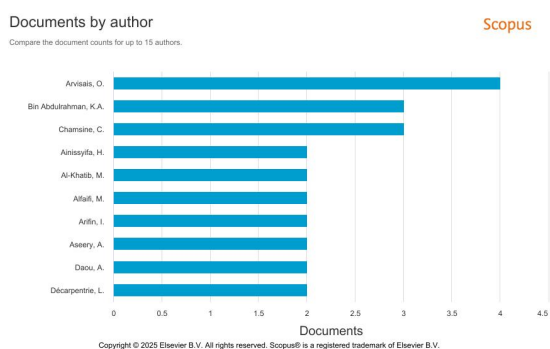


Image C3. Author's Contributions

The graph shows that authors such as O. Arvisais (4 publications), K.A. Bin Abdulrahman and C. Chamsine (3 publications each), as well as a number of other names such as H. Ainsisyfa and I. Arifin are major contributors to studies

relevant to the theme of Islamic religious education. In a bibliometric framework, this dominance represents the core group of authors in Bradford's Law, i.e. writers who quantitatively dominate scientific production in one field. This means that the dynamics of the PAI curriculum cannot be separated from the influence of this central scientist who tends to be a guide to discourse, a determinant of theme trends, and a creator of methodological foundations.

Study by (Saputra et al., 2025) supports these findings by stating that global PAI curriculum research in the past decade has been heavily influenced by the few scientists who have *Interdisciplinary Outreach*, namely the connection between Islamic approaches, digitalization, and contemporary pedagogy. This is in line with the findings (Hayuningsih & Dartim, 2025) which mentions that the integration *Artificial Intelligence* and *Problem-Based Learning* in the PAI curriculum is only carried out by writers who have cross-field competence. Meanwhile, (Saufi dan Santiani 2024) suggests that the most progressive PAI curriculum emerges from transnational collaborations, where names in the graph

such as Arvisais and Chamsine may play a role in the global constellation, for example in the development of a curriculum based on inclusivity and moderation.

4. Field of Study

Documents by subject area

Scopus

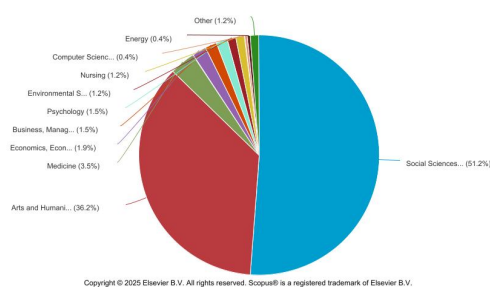


Image C4. Topics and Keywords

The *Documents by Subject Area* graph from Scopus shows that the majority of documents on the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum are in the fields of Social Sciences (51.2%) and Arts and Humanities (36.2%). These two categories reflect that the study of the PAI curriculum is more carried out from sociological, pedagogical, and humanistic approaches than natural sciences or technology. This is in line with the characteristics of the PAI curriculum which combines ethical, historical, and spiritual values with contemporary social realities, making it part of the discourse *of curriculum as a cultural practice*.

Recent bibliometric research by (Nabiel et al., 2024) emphasized that global publications related to the PAI curriculum are concentrated on the themes of religious moderation, character education, and curriculum reconstruction based on local wisdom. The study found that most of the articles were published in journals with a focus on social sciences and humanities such as *Religion and Humanities & Social Sciences Review*. A similar thing was found in a study by (Burhan et al., 2023) which analyzes the dynamics of Islamic curriculum reform through a bibliometric approach and finds the dominance of the social sciences domain in the global landscape of PAI, including in the integration of Islamic values into multicultural education and global citizenship.

5. Global Distribution

Documents by country or territory

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

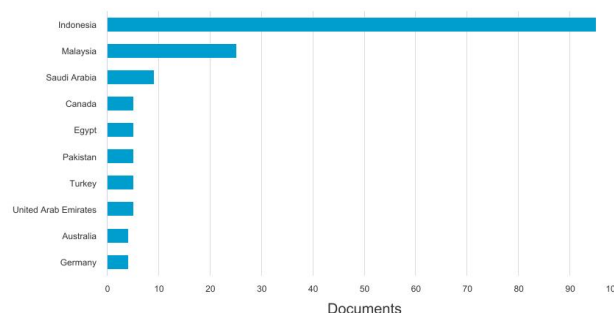
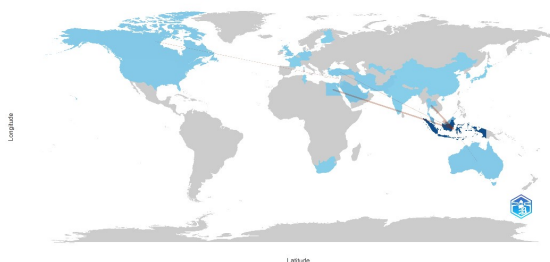


Image C5. State Contribution

Country Collaboration Map

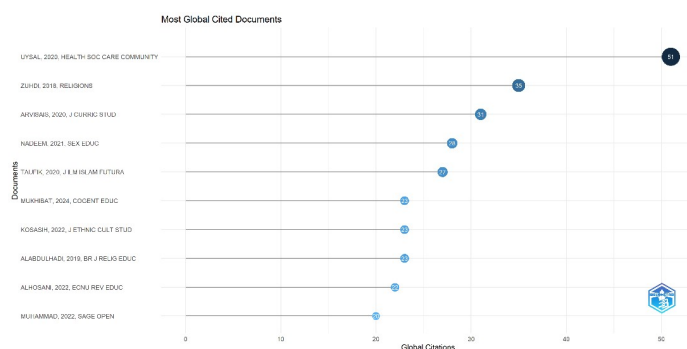
**Image C6. Country Collaboration Map**

Based on the "Documents by Country or Territory" and "Country Collaboration Map" graphs that you displayed, as well as world collaboration data from bibliometric files, it can be seen that Indonesia dominates the publication of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum globally in the period 2020–2025. With nearly four times as many documents as Malaysia, as well as strong connections to Australia, South Korea and Malaysia, Indonesia occupies a central position in the global research network. This is where countries like Indonesia are starting to move from the periphery to the semi-peripheral in the global knowledge production system in the field of Islamic Studies, especially in the curriculum.

Data on collaboration between countries shows a very important trend: the highest collaboration occurs between Egypt–Japan (138.03), Indonesia–

Australia (134,49) and Indonesia–Malaysia (109.69). This shows the existence of a strategic coalition across the Islamic world and developed countries in the development of the PAI curriculum based on the values of moderation, intercultural dialogue, and technological adaptation. In the study (Sin & Muhammad Hasbulah Sheikh Ismail, 2025) who analyzed research trends in Islamic universities in Malaysia, found that international collaborations mainly contribute to the development of a curriculum based on Islamic science-integration and multicultural approaches. They also note that collaborations with Australia and Korea resulted in high-profile publications that pushed for religious pedagogical reform in the international arena.

6. Influential Articles

**Image C7. Most Citations**

Of The Most Cited Documents Globally is the main empirical evidence in tracing these dynamics. Documents with high citation rates indicate that the study of the PAI curriculum is no longer positioned as a mere local or normative study, but has transformed into part of the global conversation. This indicates a paradigm shift—from a dogmatic curriculum to a more transformative and interdisciplinary approach. In the framework *Theory Paradigm Bibliometer* (Mubarok et al., 2025), the dynamics of research are reflected in the citation pattern, the frequency of author collaboration, and the dissemination of discourse in reputable journals.

Based on the data, the most frequently cited articles raise important themes such as Islamic curriculum reform to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the integration of the values of moderation and pluralism into religious education, and qualitative methodology as a new approach in the study of the PAI curriculum. For example, the study (Efendi et al., 2025) mapping the contribution of religious education in supporting the SDGs and emphasizing the urgency of reorienting the curriculum

towards a more adaptive and inclusive direction.

7. Current and Future Topics

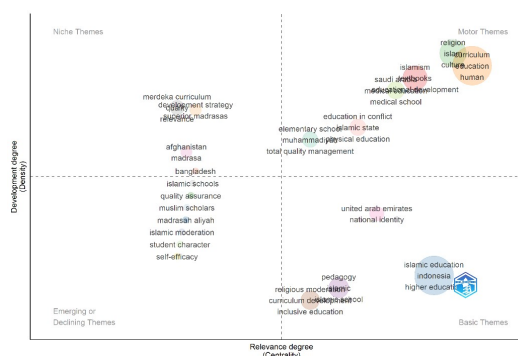


Image C8. Research Gaps

In the visualization of the thematic map, *Islamic curriculum, religion, humanities, and education* are in the quadrant *Motor theme*—a theme that is highly developed and relevant in PAI curriculum research. This research reflects the synergy between curriculum transformation and humanitarian values in the context of contemporary Islamic education. As confirmed by research (Amal et al., 2025), the inclusion of democratic values and gender equality in the Islamic education curriculum is an important focus to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 and 5. The research used a bibliometric analysis of 428 documents and found that inclusive curriculum integration was

particularly prominent in publications of the last five years.

Meanwhile, the quadrant *Basic themes* accommodates topics such as *inclusive education, religious moderation, Islamic education in Indonesia*, which although not prominent in its connection with other themes, is very fundamental and ready to develop. (Inayati & Rohmani, 2025) emphasizing that inclusive Islamic education is an essential theme in preparing the young generation who are tolerant and adaptive to social plurality. They suggest that future research focus on developing value-based curricula that integrate Islamic principles with global education policies.

Furthermore, *Emerging themes* like *Madrasah Inklusif, Quality Assurance* and *Islamic Moderation* is a signal for the future of PAI research. Although they have not yet fully developed, these themes have strategic value in designing a curriculum approach based on sharia maqashid and Islamic moderation. Research by (Yati & Hatib, 2025) suggested that an international comparative approach between Indonesia and developed countries can be a model in the

development of inclusive policies at the primary and secondary education levels. This approach is important to increase the global competitiveness of Islamic education.

D. Conclusion

This study reveals that the research dynamics in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum have experienced significant growth in the past decade, with a drastic surge in 2024 reflecting academic responses to curriculum reforms, issues of religious moderation, and the integration of human and national values. The thematic map shows that issues such as *curriculum, religion, human, and Islamic education* are the main themes, indicating an increasingly transformative and interdisciplinary direction of research. Indonesia occupies a dominant position in publication contributions, but cross-border collaborative networks are also increasingly forming, especially with countries such as Australia, Malaysia, and South Korea. In general, the PAI curriculum is no longer understood as a normative device, but has shifted to an epistemic discourse

space that is adaptive to the global challenges of education.

The study only analyzed articles that were indexed on Scopus and in English, so it was likely to rule out important publications in Indonesian, Arabic, or other languages that were not indexed internationally. In addition, the use of keywords limited to TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic education" AND "curriculum") may miss relevant studies that use different terms such as *syllabus*, *instructional design*, or *Islamic pedagogy*. The aspect of thematic analysis also relies on co-word algorithms that have limitations in interpreting complex semantic meanings.

This research provides an academic contribution by presenting bibliometric mapping that has not been done specifically for the PAI curriculum. This mapping shows the direction, the strength of collaboration, scientific productivity, and themes that are and will develop. For policymakers and educational institutions, the results of this study provide a data-driven foundation for designing curriculum policies that are more contextual, inclusive, and future-oriented. Findings on emerging themes can also be used by

researchers to develop further research in areas that have not been optimally worked on.

Further research is needed that includes other sources such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and WOS, as well as expanding search keywords to make the results more comprehensive. It is also recommended to conduct a qualitative analysis of articles that have a high citation impact to understand the narrative and methodological content that makes them influential. Future researchers should also examine the linkage of the PAI curriculum with transnational topics such as digitalization, multicultural education, and the reconstruction of Islamic epistemology. Higher education institutions need to strengthen international collaboration, not only in joint publications but also in joint curriculum development so that Islamic Religious Education becomes a globally relevant intellectual force.

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